

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the foregoing amendments, claims 1, 2, and 6-25 are pending in the present application, with claims 1 and 21 being the independent claims. Claims 3-5 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. New claims 21-25 have been added. Based on the above amendments and following remarks, Applicant respectfully requests that all outstanding objections and rejections be withdrawn.

Objection to the Claims

The Office Action on page 2 objects to claims 11, 12, and 15 because of informalities. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that the word "the" should be added between the words "is" and "only." Applicant would like to thank the Examiner for noting the informalities. Claims 11, 12, and 15 have been editorially amended to now recite "said transmission control rule obtained by said first search means includes only transmission route information..." Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Office Action on pages 3-4 rejects claims 4, 6, 7, and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that the claims contain subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

As per claim 4, the Office Action asserts that the recitation of "storage position information" is not described. Claim 4 has been cancelled, thus rendering this rejection moot with respect to claim 4.

As per claims 6 and 7, the Office Action asserts that the recitation of "...layer of the protocol..." is not described. Claims 6 and 7 have been editorially amended to now recite "...third layer in the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) reference model..." Support for such a recitation may be found in the specification, for example, on pages 1-3, lines 19-12, respectively.

As per claim 9, the Office Action asserts that the recitation of "orientation information" is not described. Claim 9 has been editorially amended to recite "information for deciding a transmission route." Support for such a recitation may be found in the specification, for example, on pages 6-7, lines 13-18, respectively.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

The Office Action on pages 4-5 rejects claims 1-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Specifically, the Office Action asserts that the claims are generally narrative and indefinite and they appear to be a literal translation into English from a foreign document.

As per claim 1, the Office Action asserts that the recitation "...corresponding to the information that has thus been read..." is unclear because it lacks antecedent basis. Claim 1 has been editorially amended to now recite "said prescribed information." Accordingly, claim 1 is now definite.

Claim 4 has been canceled, thus rendering this rejection moot with respect to claim 4.

As per claim 6, the Office Action asserts that the recitation "the third layer of the protocol or a layer above this..." is indefinite for three reasons. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection. First, the Office Action asserts that it is unclear what protocol is being referred to. Claim 6 has been editorially amended to recite the "Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) reference model" instead of the "protocol," thus making claim 6 definite because the OSI reference model is very

well-known. Second, the Office Action asserts that it is unclear as to what layer above "this" is referred to and, specifically, what element "this" refers to. Claim 6 has been editorially amended to remove the term "this," thus making claim 6 definite. Third, the Office Action asserts that the recitations "the third layer" and "the protocol" lack antecedent basis. As amended, claim 6 now recites "belonging to the third layer in the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) reference model or a layer above said third layer." Applicants respectfully submit that, although claim 6 contains references to "the third layer" and "the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) reference model," claim 6 is definite because the third layer of the OSI reference model is very well known. In view of the above, claim 6, as amended, is definite.

As per claim 7, the Office Action asserts that the recitation of "...the second layer of the protocol..." is indefinite because the recitations "the second layer" and "the protocol" lack antecedent basis. Claim 7 has been editorially amended to recite "the second layer in the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) reference model." Applicants respectfully submit that, although claim 7 contains references to "the second layer" and "the Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) reference model," claim 7 is definite because the second layer of the OSI reference model is very well known. Accordingly, claim 7 is definite.

As per claim 13, the Office Action asserts that the recitations of "search results that have already been input" and "said newly input transmission control rule" lack antecedent. Claim 13 has been editorially amended to remove the noted recitations and now recite definite subject matter.

The remaining claims 2, 6, 8, 9-12, and 14-20 depend variously from claim 1 and are definite at least as a result of the editorial amendments to claim 1.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

The Office Action on pages 5-11 rejects claims 1-16 and 18-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,917,821 to Gobuyan et al. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Applicant initially notes that claims 3-5 have been canceled, thus rendering this rejection moot with respect to claims 3-5.

As amended, independent claim 1 recites that each of the first and second search means comprises "a storage for storing said transmission control rule and a bit map for referencing said transmission control rule which is not stored in a storage of itself but stored in a storage of other search means." In an exemplary embodiment of the invention, the recited first and second search means have storages and bit maps. In such an embodiment, when a same transmission control rule is used by a plurality of search means, only one search means may store the transmission control rule in its own storage, and the other search means may reference the transmission control rule in that search means using a bit map. The bit map may store information concerning the other search means. As a result, the recited search means do not need to store all of the transmission control rules corresponding to themselves, but may store only transmission control rules that are not stored in the other search means.

Gobuyan does not teach or suggest the recited bit map for referencing said transmission control rule which is not stored in a storage of itself but stored in a storage of other search means. Instead, Gobuyan teaches a look-up engine which has a destination addresses look-up engine (DALE) and a source addresses look-up engine that provides information needed to find the path to each known destination. See, Gobuyan, col. 4, lines 28-30. Such a look-up engine does not teach or suggest a bit map for referencing said transmission control rule which is not stored in a storage of itself but stored in a storage of other search means. Further, the term "bit map" is not mentioned anywhere in Gobuyan. Accordingly, claim 1 is allowable over Gobuyan because claim 1 is not anticipated by Gobuyan.

The remaining claims 2, 6-16, and 18-20 depend variously from claim 1 and are allowable for at least the reason that they depend from an allowable claim.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection of the Claims Under 35 U.S.C. § 103

The Office Action on pages 11-13 rejects claim 17 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,917,821 to Gobuyan et al. in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. 2000-188608. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection because the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Claim 17 depends from claim 1. As discussed above, claim 1 recites a bit map for referencing said transmission control rule which is not stored in a storage of itself but stored in a storage of other search means. Further, as discussed above, Guboyan does not teach or suggest the recited bit map. Japanese Patent Publication No. 2000-188608 does not cure this deficiency. Instead, Japanese Patent Publication No. 2000-188608 teaches a technique of speeding up a route search using a dichotomizing search method. Accordingly, claim 17 is allowable because the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

In view of the above, Applicants respectfully request that this rejection be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

All of the stated grounds of objection and rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding objections and rejections and that they be withdrawn. Applicant believes that a full and complete reply has been made to the outstanding Office Action and, as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is hereby invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided.

Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

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Respectfully submitted,

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